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DRAFTED BY NEA/IAI:MGANDERSON:VBJ
APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.
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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 043537
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E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: MILI, IS, US
SUBJECT:SS LIBERTY CLAIM
REFS: (A) USDEL CAIRO 0019, (B) STATE 7098, (C) TEL AVIV 474

1. U.S. CLAIM AGAINST ISRAEL FOR $7.6 MILLION IN DAMAGES TO USS LIBERTY LAST RAISED BY AMBASSADOR WITH EVRON ON JANUARY 11 (REF C). IN ABSENCE OF RESPONSE FROM GOI, REQUEST AMBASSADOR RAISE MATTER ONCE AGAIN WITH EVRON.

2. AMBASSADOR SHOULD SAY THAT HE HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DELIVER FORMAL NOTE STATING U.S. CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION AND ASKING FOR FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO SETTLEMENT.

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DEPARTMENT, AND AMBASSADOR PERSONALLY, WOULD PREFER TO AVOID MAKING FORMAL APPROACH, BUT IF GOI CAN PROVIDE NO OTHER SUGGESTIONS ON HOW MATTER MIGHT BE HANDLED, THIS APPEARS TO BE ONLY COURSE OF ACTION OPEN TO USG.

3. YOU SHOULD INFORM EVRON THAT YOU HAVE CERTAIN AMOUNT OF LEEWAY IN TERMS OF WHEN NOTE MUST BE DELIVERED TO MFA, BUT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO DELAY DELIVERY MUCH LONGER.

4. TEXT OF NOTE TO BE DELIVERED TO MFA, IF NO SATISFACTORY RESPONSE IS RECEIVED FROM EVRON, FOLLOWS:

5. BEGIN TEXT: THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL AND DRAWS ITS ATTENTION TO THE OUTSTANDING CLAIM OF THE UNITED STATES AGAINST ISRAEL FOR $7.6 MILLION IN COMPENSATION FOR PHYSICAL DAMAGES TO THE USS LIBERTY. THESE DAMAGES WERE INCURRED AS A RESULT OF AN ATTACK BY THE ARMED FORCES OF ISRAEL ON THE SHIP AS IT LAY IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS ON JUNE 8, 1967.

- PROMPTLY FOLLOWING THE ATTACK, THE GOVERNMENT OF

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EXDIS
NODIS REVIEW
Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC
Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S
Cat. C - Caption and custody retained by S/S
Reviewed by: John Burgon
Date: 13 Jan 1983

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 4/16/03
[illegible] EXT. BA
RELEASE DENIED
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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ISRAEL INFORMED THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT THAT IT ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ATTACK AND WAS PREPARED TO MAKE AMENDS FOR THE LOSSES, HUMAN AND MATERIAL, WHICH RESULTED.

- ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL HAS SATISFACTORILY COMPENSATED THE VICTIMS OF THE ATTACK AND THEIR SURVIVORS, THE CLAIM FOR DAMAGES TO THE SHIP ITSELF, PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL ON JULY 1, 1968, HAS YET TO BE SATIS-

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FACTORILY SETTLED.

- IN VIEW OF THE LONG PASSAGE OF TIME SINCE THE CLAIM WAS PRESENTED AND THE LACK OF A SATISFACTORY RESPONSE ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEREBY REQUESTS THAT NEGOTIATIONS BE COMMENCED LEADING TO A PAYMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL OF A SUM SUFFICIENT TO COVER THE DAMAGES TO THE SHIP.

- THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, COGNIZANT OF THE CLOSE AND WARM RELATIONS BETWEEN IT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL, FEELS THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO SETTLE THIS LONG-STANDING DISPUTE WHICH PERIODICALLY TROUBLES RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

- IN THE AMICABLE SPIRIT THAT HAS ALWAYS CHARACTERIZED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL, WE LOOK FORWARD TO AN EARLY RESPONSE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL SUGGESTING A TIME AND PLACE FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN LEADING TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THIS CLAIM. (REGULAR DIPLOMATIC NOTE CLOSING). END TEXT. VANCE

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